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(43)

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AN: D750241-0851

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ORIGIN IO-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

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REVIEWED BY HSO DATE 5/21/82

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TS AUTH. REASON(S)

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 161314 ACTION TAIPEI INFO HONG KONG PEKING TOKYO SEOUL AND MANILA 09 JUL 75

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MNUC, PARM, TW

SUBJECT: TIME STORY ALLEGING GROC DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

REF: TAIPEI 04085

1. FOLLOWING IS PORTION OF ARTICLE ENTITLED "ASIA: BALANCING THE TIGER WITH THE WOLF" BY JERROLD L. SCHECTER (TIME 7/14/75) DEALING WITH TAIWAN:

2. THE US DEFENSE COMMITMENT TO TAIWAN, FORMALIZED BY THE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY OF 1954, IS ANOTHER MAJOR ELEMENT IN THE BALANCE OF FORCES IN ASIA. THE FALL OF VIETNAM HAS, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, STRENGTHENED TAIWAN'S POSITION WITH THE US. "THERE IS LESS LIKELIHOOD THAN A YEAR

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AGO THAT THE US WILL MOVE RAPIDLY TO ESTABLISH FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH PEKING," SAID A SENIOR US OFFICIAL IN TAIPEI.

3. YET EVEN THE TAIPEI GOVERNMENT IS CONTEMPLATING ALTERNATIVES TO A US-GUARANTEED DEFENSE. TAIWAN, WHICH HAS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ONLY 29 COUNTRIES, WILL CLEARLY TRY TO EMPHASIZE ITS ECONOMIC STRENGTH--FOREIGN TRADE INCREASED FROM $4.1 BILLION IN 1971 TO $12.6 BILLION LAST YEAR--TO COUNTER GROWING DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION. AND IT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY TRY TO MAINTAIN ENOUGH MILITARY STRENGTH TO DETER AN ALL-OUT INVASION OF THE ISLAND BY PEKING.

4. US INTELLIGENCE E
RELIANCE WILL EVENTUALLY INCLUDE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, PRODUCED WITH ENRICHED URANIUM FROM EXISTING REACTORS ON THE ISLAND. THE PROBABLE TARGET DATE FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPON IS 1980. AN AMERICAN EXPERT WHO HAS BEEN STUDYING NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENTS ON TAIWAN EXPLAINS THAT "THEY ARE MAKING THE TESTS BY PROGRAMMING EXPERIMENTS ON COMPUTERS, THE WAY THE ISRAELIS DID," RATHER THAN OPENLY EXPLODING THEIR WEAPONS.

5. MENDING FENCES. ALL US COMBAT AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE ISLAND, AND AMERICAN TROOPS WILL BE REDUCED FROM 4,400 TO 2,800 BY EARLY FALL, BUT THE US CONTINUES TO CONDUCT JOINT CONTINGENCY-PLANNING EXERCISES WITH TAIWAN'S MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. SUCH EXERCISES INDICATE THAT ANY US MOVE TO ESTABLISH FORMAL RELATIONS WITH CHINA THIS YEAR WILL BE MADE ONLY IF WASHINGTON CAN RETAIN ITS TIES WITH TAIWAN. PEKING WILL HAVE TO AGREE THAT "NORMALIZATION AND THE SOLUTION OF THE TAIWAN PROBLEM ARE NOT SIMULTANEOUS," SAY US OFFICIALS.

6. AS CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG'S MENTAL AND PHYSICAL POWERS WEAKEN, THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS WILL BE CONCENTRATING ON THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF POLITICAL SUCCESSION. THE TAIWANESE, FOR THEIR PART, ARE REALISTIC

ABOUT THEIR FUTURE PROSPECTS. "NORTHEAST ASIA IS NOW THE FRONT LINE," EXPLAINS A SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. "WE MUST STRENGTHEN OUR EXISTING RELATIONS WITH KOREA AND MEND FENCES WITH JAPAN." IN THE NEW POWER BALANCING, THAT MAY BE ACCEPTABLE TO CHINA--AS LONG AS THE US CONTINUES TO HAVE AN ACTIVE, CONSTRAINING INFLUENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION.

7. TO DATE, PRESS HAS NOT RAISED ISSUE HERE. IF IT DOES, WE PLAN TO RESPOND BY NOTING THAT THE GROC HAS DENIED THE ALLEGATION THAT IT IS DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THAT THE GROC IS A PARTY TO THE NPT, AND THAT WE EXPECT THAT ALONG WITH OTHER PARTIES TO THE TREATY, IT WILL LIVE UP TO ITS OBLIGATIONS.

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UNQUOTE., INGERSOLL